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Who Was Behind the Anthrax Attacks?

More evidence Bruce Ivins was a scapegoat

by [Justin Raimondo](#), July 20, 2011

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The **admission** by the Justice Department that they know the alleged perpetrator of the **anthrax attacks** did not have the means to create anthrax in his lab is hardly surprising: after all, this is an “investigation” that has been so mishandled that one has to question whether the point of it was ever to find the real culprit.

Indeed, I would venture to say that the US government is engaged in a massive cover-up. A serious charge, but one not made lightly: indeed, given what we know, it's almost impossible to draw any other conclusion.

To begin with, it is clear from the evidence that **Bruce Ivins**, the scientist accused of creating and sending the anthrax – and who **committed suicide** before he could be brought to trial – is a patsy, and that the government would like nothing better than for this case to go away. But it isn't going away. The most recent revelations are occasioned by a **lawsuit brought** by the relatives of the anthrax killers' first victim, charging that the government's neglect and sheer incompetence caused the death of Robert Stevens, a photographer for the Florida-based Sun newspaper group. In response, government lawyers presented evidence that blows apart their own case against the departed Ivins:

*“On July 15, however, Justice Department lawyers **acknowledged in court papers** that the sealed area in Ivins' lab – the so-called hot suite – did not contain the equipment needed to turn liquid anthrax into the refined powder that floated through congressional buildings and post offices in the fall of 2001.*

“The government said it continues to believe that Ivins was ‘more likely than not’

the killer. But the filing in a Florida court did not explain where or how Ivins could have made the powder, saying only that the lab “did not have the specialized equipment” in Ivins’ secure lab “that would be required to prepare the dried spore preparations that were used in the letters.”

“More likely than not?” Isn’t that a rather loose way to approach the question – especially when what we’re talking about isn’t an ordinary whodunit murder investigation, but a probe into the inner workings of a crime that **galvanized public opinion** in support of a **major** war? Remember the fear that swept the nation like a tsunami, the calls for the destruction of Iraq by **Andrew Sullivan** and his **then-friends** in the War Party? Recall the general assumption – buttressed by **US government officials** – that **the Iraqis** were the culprits? The hysteria generated by the anthrax-in-our-mailboxes scare was a **key element** in driving us to war with Iraq, and we’ll live with the consequences of that for a **long time** to come. Yet the US government’s interest in finding out who launched the anthrax attacks is remarkably casual.

When they couldn’t palm it off on **Dr. Steven Hatfill** – because he **bravely fought back**, and was fully exonerated after a life-shattering battle – they looked around for another scapegoat, and found a likely one in Ivins. One profile, published in the **Los Angeles Times**, starts out like this:

“He roamed the University of Cincinnati campus with a loaded gun. When his rage overflowed, the brainy microbiology major would open fire inside empty buildings, visualizing a wall clock or other object as a person who had done him wrong.”

Ivins was convicted in the media, and driven to suicide, and yet the same media has since joined with several prominent politicians and **scientists** to challenge the verdict. The government admits the **evidence** [pdf] against Ivins is purely circumstantial, and is coming under increasing pressure to reopen the investigation as, one by one, the pillars of its case against Ivins have collapsed. The so-called genetic analysis done by the FBI, which supposedly incriminates Ivins, has since been **disproved**. This latest admission, entered as evidence by government lawyers in a claim for damages, pretty much pulverizes the case against Ivins. And so the question remains: who carried out the anthrax attacks that terrorized a nation in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks – and why?

It’s not like the authorities are lacking in leads. As I have reported **previously**,

“Just before the anthrax letters became public knowledge but after they’d been mailed, military police headquarters at Quantico, Virginia, received a letter that accused an Arab scientist who once worked at the USAMRIID facility, a biowarfare lab at Ft. Detrick, of being a terrorist about to unleash biological warfare against civilian targets in the U.S.

*“The author of this anonymous missive claimed to have been one of the scientist’s former co-workers, and appeared to have a detailed knowledge of Assaad’s career and daily routine. When the anthrax letters were opened, the FBI paid a visit to Dr. **Ayaad Assaad**, a former Ft. Detrick employee, and questioned him extensively.*

*“The FBI cleared Assaad of any connection to the anthrax letters early on, but then seemed to have let this significant clue grow quite cold, failing to follow up on it until the winter of 2004, when they **launched** an investigation into the Quantico letter. It seems clear that whoever sent that letter had at least foreknowledge of the anthrax attacks, and discovering the writers’ identity could certainly lead us to the*

source of the attacks. Yet for years the FBI did nothing: instead, they chased Hatfill around, following him everywhere, blackening his name – and diverting attention away from the only hard evidence that has so far surfaced in this baffling case.”

As far as I know, the results of the Quantico investigation were never announced. The only media outlets to pay attention to this fascinating yet little known aspect of the anthrax mystery are Salon – some **years ago** – and the *Hartford Courant*, which ran a **series of articles** on the anthrax case and the attempted framing of Dr. Assaad.

Whoever tried to frame Dr. Assaad knows a thing or two about the real perpetrators, of that we can be sure. Yet the FBI has never showed the least amount of interest in this aspect of the case. Why not?

The mystery deepens when we learn the Obama administration **threatened** to veto an intelligence appropriations bill which contained an amendment mandating a reopening of the anthrax investigation by an independent (non-government) body of experts. What is this administration afraid of? Who or what are they protecting?

The answer, I believe, is to be found in the circumstances that led the authors of the Quantico letter to choose Dr. Assaad, in particular, as their chosen fall guy.

An Egyptian-born biologist who worked at USAMRID in the early 1990s, Assaad was the target of a **hate campaign** at his work site. The haters were USAMRID employees who targeted Assaad because he is Arab, and who went to great lengths to communicate that hatred: the *Courant* series gives a harrowing account. The *Courant* also reports on after hours visits by one member of this group to the secure facility where anthrax and other toxins are stored: a video clearly shows him gaining entry. In addition, there is considerable evidence of unauthorized experiments carried out by this group. The harassment of Dr. Assaad ended in a lawsuit, and the members of the “Camel Club” – as they called themselves – voluntarily left Ft. Detrick after the case was settled out of court.

Yet the harassment didn’t end, it only paused – until, years later, the Camel Club struck again, in the form of the Quantico letter, accusing Assaad of being the evil Arab mastermind behind the anthrax attacks. That this letter reached Quantico *after* the anthrax letters had been mailed, but *before* their existence was public knowledge, is the kind of mistake which should have caught up with the real perpetrators long before now.

The question is: why hasn’t it? What’s scary is that the real perpetrators are still out there. Are they getting ready to strike again – and why is our own government standing in the way of re-opening the investigation? Just thinking about it sends a shiver down my spine.

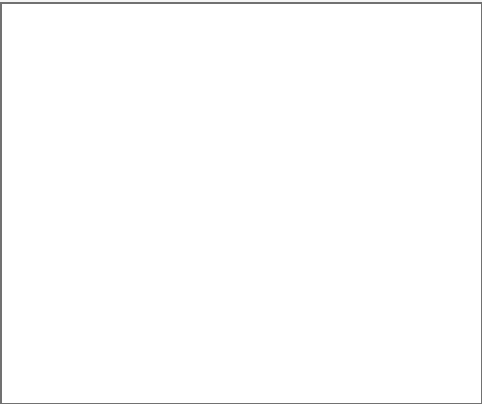
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